Desertion of AWACS Project

2742. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Air Force Project on the development of an Airborne Warning And Control System (AWACS) has been foreclosed after over 25 years of development of millions of dollars spent; and

(b) if so, what are the details of this and the exact expenditure incurred till date?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Using its experience in developing ground-based radars, the Defence Research and Development Organisation had initiate a Technology Development (TD) project in 1985 for an Airborne Surveillance Platform (ASP) with the Avro HS-74S transport aircraft. The purpose of the project was to enable the formulation of a detailed Project Definition Report to meet IAF requirements, based on engineering work undertaken in the TD phase. The ASP project, thus, is a DRDO project. A number of critical technologies for an airborne radar, including experimental flights on a modified Avro with a radar housed in a rotodome, were realized under the ASP project during 1985—1991. The total expenditure incurred has been Rs. 52.09 crore. Subsequent tQ the crash of the Avro ASP aircraft in January 1999, project activities in DRDO have been short-closed.

West Bengal journeys of Defence Minister

2743. SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY: WiU the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item "George's two caps leave Government exposed" in the Times of India, New Delhi, dated 10th January, 2001 regarding visit of Defence Minister to Midaapore in September, 2000;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether a temporary helipad was made in Midnapore for the visit; and

(d) if so, the 'official' reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) The journey, performed had been in official capacity.

(c) Temporary helipad at Midnapore was made/arranged by the Railway authorities.

(d) The journey was performed on the directions of the Prime Minister, to take stock of the law and order situation.

Acquisition of Sukhoi Jets

2744. SHRI V. P. DURAISAMY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is acquiring Sukhoi-Su-30 MKI two-Seat, multi-purpose fighter, for the Indian Air Force;

(b) if so, the details and its features thereof;

(c) what is the cost involved; and

(d) whether this new acquisition will shelve AJT?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Su-30 MKI aircraft is an advanced multi-role, combat aircraft, fitted with modern avionics, and capable of superior maneuverability.

(d) No, Sir.